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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses changes at the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and suggests changes in the role of the school librarian, by way of a shift from a traditional helping role to a leadership role. Because librarians have knowledge of the whole curriculum, they are in a unique position to lead the way for teachers and to help them integrate learning across the curriculum. Librarians must begin to change from merely offering suggestions of materials to supplementing classroom teaching, and directing the collaborative experiences teachers offer their students, so that teachers will adjust their activities to combine isolated lessons and design them to meet different learning styles. It is only in this way that all students will be well prepared to be contributing members of a global society. Librarians must know the teachers and the curriculum, as well as exactly what and when teachers teach specific units, whom they teach, and how they teach. To find the answers to some of these questions, librarians are advised to predict teaching styles; discuss teaching strategies and resource based teaching; point out materials available in the library; record planning sessions and the actual outcome of the unit; base any suggestions on existing research; keep the students as the primary focus; and help teachers adapt lesson plans into multicultural experiences. (SWC)

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Across the Curriculum: Across the World

by
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It is my pleasure today to speak to you as a member of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) and also as President of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), one of the eleven divisions of the American Library Association. I plan to discuss very briefly changes across the curriculum and across the world at AASL. Then, suggestions will be made for changes in your approach to your role as a school librarian that will make changes in your professional lives. Some of these changes will be placed in the context of multi-cultural experiences for children at all grades and stages, changes that must occur in their lives as they prepare for the changes they will meet in the next century. I will end with an invitation to visit the University of Pittsburgh next year when IASL meets there. But first, changes at AASL.

Those elected to a division presidency declare a theme for their presidential year. I have chosen "Changes Changes". This seems to fit into many recent conference concepts. Our immediate past AASL president, Ruth Toor, in order to feature change during her New Orleans conference program, invited a high school librarian to share with us plans for her new school and the changes being made in her high school library. This library must provide information to meet the challenges awaiting students as they prepare for life in 2000 and beyond.

Ann Weeks, Executive Director of AASL, is managing our new Library Power project, a multi-million dollar demonstration program sponsored by DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. To participate, school districts form coalitions between business and civic leaders, parents and educators, who must mobilize their energies and resources to change public education at the local level. Thus, "in the successful Library Power projects change goes beyond libraries to the educational process through the schools and districts".[1] The Library Power project provides qualifying agencies million dollar grants to expand school libraries in cities around the US who agree to demonstrate changes and to build a picture of technology innovations through school libraries. The first projects were implemented in New York City in 1988. School libraries in nearly 150 New York City Public Schools were transformed with paint and other renovations, and filled with books.

My role here is to speak to you as a member of the International Association of School Librarians and during our joint conference with the Australian School Librarians Association. Our conference planners here in Adelaide are well aware of the need for school librarians to prepare for and implement change. They have expanded today's theme, "Society", into "building a picture of society as we go towards the year 2000, and beyond...daring to be innovative in our response to and management of CHANGE in school librarianship".

My means of meeting this theme begins with a plan for change, change you must make to move from our more traditional helping role, into a leadership role, perhaps a major change for you. If our students are to become information literate, we must begin to work as chairs of the curriculum team rather than as just members. Again, Ann Weeks is modelling this changed concept as she chairs the Alliance for Curriculum Reform, a group of curriculum related national associations including the National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Math, the International Reading Association, and the Association for Supervision of Curriculum Development, among others. She was elected because she was in a unique position to lead with credibility in ALL the areas of the curriculum rather than allegiance to one, and there lies our true strength.

Because we owe allegiance to no single area of the curriculum, we are in a unique position to lead the way for teachers and to help them integrate learning across the curriculum. We must accept that role and begin to change from merely offering suggestions of materials to supplement classroom teaching, to directing the collaborative experiences teachers offer their students. We must be an integral part of that

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planning so teachers will adjust their activities to combine isolated lessons and design them to meet difference in learning styles. It is only in that way that all students will be well prepared to be contributing members of a global society. Can we do it? Can we move from being merely active partners across the curriculum to active leaders beyond the classroom, working directly with administrators and parents to further the education of children?

Moving into a leadership role may be less than comfortable for you. If you do not feel capable to such a role at this time, perhaps you should plan to take courses with those who are preparing to be educational leaders, those who plan to be the headmaster or building principal or whatever the administrative leader's title is. That does not mean that you will or should leave your position in the school library when you finish the courses, but that you will meet others who are striving to become effective leaders and you will learn what they are expected to know to undertake this role. You will quickly understand that it isn't easier or harder for another than for you; it merely takes the desire to learn and implement some leadership "rules and regulations".

Why you? We have discussed the fact that you have no allegiance to one area of the curriculum, but your knowledge of the whole curriculum means you can be skilful in combining units and teachers across the curriculum. Another reason is that, except for the principal, no other person in the school knows all the teachers, all the students, AND all the curriculum. In North America, we are striving to implement "resource-based teaching". We are moving from that helping role to a leadership role because that is the way we can meet the mission of our national guidelines, *Information Power*,"...to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information.[2] Assistance with change is needed to encourage teachers to adopt new methods of encouraging the development of critical thinking skills in their students. We must do this without adding appreciably to their present workload. It is up to us not only to know the teachers and the curriculum, but we must be aware of exactly what and when teachers teach specific units, whom they teach, and how they teach. While I am sure that you know very well whom they teach, I am less certain that we know what, when, and how they teach.

What if you don't know what and when all the teachers teach their units? If you are new to the school, you can begin by locating the master schedule of teachers and the grade levels or classes they are being assigned for the academic year. You will then develop a *curriculum unit* notebook with information about each teacher. You will need to:

- Develop a form for collecting information about each teacher.

This form includes information from the following:

- Look at the textbooks in use and see what *is* suggested
- Analyze any school curriculum guides that are available.

When you have this skeleton information, make an appointment with the teacher and discuss when (which weeks) and how long (how many weeks, days) the course will be taught. If you can begin to prepare a bibliography of materials that are available in the library, you can share this with the teacher. To begin to complete your form during the meeting, you will want to begin to determine the teacher's teaching style.

Predict Teaching Styles

While it is difficult to analyze teaching styles unless you can conduct classroom observations over time, you can make some assumptions based upon the type of materials they request and the activities they prefer. Many may still rely heavily on the lecture method, so you must suggest new teaching strategies.

Discuss Teaching Strategies, and Resource Based Teaching

You must sell them on resource-based teaching. Explain that this is a process of using materials beyond the textbook and readily available in the library. Share with them some ideas for activities that you will plan for the library and those you will plan for the classroom. Share with them you plans for helping students conduct research in the library. While these appear at first glance to take an unusual amount of additional time, you must show them how it will become easier over time as student interest in learning activities grows. You must try to begin with activities with which they will be comfortable before you introduce major changes.

Point Out Materials Available in the Library

Now is the time to show them the materials available in the library on the topic,

what should be requested from other sites, which research skills the students may need to learn, and any other pertinent information. You will begin to help them decide which parts of the unit you will take responsibility, which you should do together.

Record Your Planning Session and the Actual Outcome of the Unit

One suggestion is to maintain your planning files in a loose leaf notebook for easy access. You can easily record the planning and recording the activities that were most helpful for the teacher and most effective for the students and keep special bibliographies with these units. With this notebook, everything will be in one location, conveniently stored in your office. If you complete at least three teachers each semester, it will not take you very long to have every teacher in your file.

You must add to your file at the close of the unit of instruction adding information from the evaluation process. Students and teacher will help determine the value of any materials used in the unit to see their relevance, recency, and to learn if you have enough copies. What works best, the preferred activities, and the result of any testing should be added to your record.

Now you are ready to take the next step. If you haven't determined another curriculum area, unit of instruction, or teacher who might be interested in integrating with this unit, review your notebook to see if overlap exists that you have forgotten. Coordinating integration across the curriculum will become almost second nature to you once you have in depth understanding of what and when your teachers teach.

One very recent educational trend is to base student learning as much as possible in the real world. By leading across the curriculum, you can relate the math fractions to the cooking measurement in the home economics class or relative times for athletes at track meets.

The first units you prepare will be the most difficult because you aren't certain how it will work. However, it will not take as long as you think, and you will need to do a major update of the information only when new teachers are hired or when present teachers change the grade level or subject area they are teaching or when curriculum reviews occur. Even with major curriculum revisions or new textbook adoptions, you will still understand the teachers' teaching styles and you will be working with someone you have helped previously.

Your suggestions may carry more emphasis if they can be shown to be successful in the research.

As Often as Possible Base Any Suggestion in the Research

Keeping up with research may not seem easy and reading research is sometimes boring. Attending ASLA and IASL, it is inevitable that you will have an opportunity to learn about the "hot" research results. In the US we have a group of library researchers called "Treasure Mountain" who are doing that for the school library profession. We meet irregularly to study research of school library programs, and we relate the research we find to the practitioner as well as to the researcher, a very successful model. Papers[3] from the first conference were published by Hi Willow Research and Publishing.

In the US, two new reports of research may be of interest to you, *Impact of School Library Media Programs*[4] and *The Power of Reading*[5] to share with you today. The first reports the results of a national study and its replication in the state of Colorado. Lance's report found that the school library media program managed by a school librarian was the single predictor of student achievement. The second book by Krashen demonstrated the power of reading in the lives of children and points out that children who do a great deal of free voluntary reading have improvements in grammar and spelling as well as reading comprehension.

You must also keep up with research in education. Most educational innovation is implemented with little if any research base, and most of it dies, fades away, or is remodelled into something different before any extensive research can be done on its effectiveness. However, much can be gained from keeping yourself and your teachers informed of any research that indicated successful teaching methods or educational outcomes from specific activities.

Who Teachers Teach as Primary Focus

Records of student performance are on file, but you may not need to refer to these. You are in a unique position to have many of the same students year after year. If you can recognize and relate to their learning styles

early on, it is likely that you can continue to do so easily since those styles usually have little change. You can help teachers who may have a conflict of teaching style with a student's learning style adapt assignments to meet the learning needs of students from one grade to the next. This will make for a happier classroom for everyone.

Finally, we must help teachers and students broaden their perspectives to go into the wider world. "Across the world" means that many of us are already drawing ever closer together. We must help our teachers through our resource-based environment to adapt lesson plans into multi-cultural experiences. More and more our countries are offering asylum and citizenship to others who are displaced from their countries of origin for political, economic, or religious reasons. Our students are learning new culture from their classmates who arrive from distant shores.

Children are no longer limited to seeing how other people live from reading in books or meeting them in the classroom, they are also learning from television and movies. We must help them have a true picture by teaching them to question what they see and to check and confirm their impressions in alternative sources. One of those sources may be first-hand communication with others. Through INTERNET as well as other electronic mail connections, children are "talking" to each other across the world. If children can't find out what kinds of food are served at meals during the holidays in another country in one of your references, they need only e-mail a school in that country and ask the students there what they are going to eat for their holiday.

Children learn from a classroom that is some distance from their own. With distance education, children can learn Japanese from teachers in Japan or share a science curriculum with students in another city near them or some distance away. They are also learning the power of information in political times. One of the reasons attributed to the failed coup in Russia two years ago was the ability of citizens to communicate to the outside world with FAX and e-mail. The opportunity to share information is not limited to adults during stressful national situations, it is available to our children in their schools and classrooms. The ability to communicate greatly enhances the ability to understand differences.

We are preparing our children for a global society. children today will grow up in nations brought closer together through manufacture of products in one country that will be sold in another. Most of us are aware that our children must not only survive, but must achieve and excel in this international environment if our countries are to grow. We must also reach the acceptance of differences.

A friend of mine is always pointing out the terrible happenings in this world in the past, present, and perhaps future that are often done in the name of religion. Tolerance of differences can only come about if differences are understood. Until our children understand another country's customs, what happens there may seem silly or frightening or threatening. Tolerance is an example of acceptance of change.

Change is not easy. How much more common is resistance to change than acceptance and adoption of change. Many of our teachers are often very unwilling to change. When this is true they become defensive of the status quo. Yet, change is inevitable and constant. How much more quickly we must adapt to change because of the speed with which our environment, our work places our very lives change. While the flight to Australia seemed incredibly long compared to a flight crossing the US from my home in Pittsburgh to a vacation in Hawaii, how much longer would the trip have been if we did not have jet planes, or no planes.

While some of us are beginning summer vacation, others are into our 93-94 school year. I challenge you to plan changes. Do it alone? NO! Try to get your fellow librarians to share with you the tasks that have been described above, and write about your successes and ask for suggestions to solve your failures. When you develop an effective, interesting integrated curriculum unit, publish it so it can be shared.

I want to hear from you the successes you have in making changes next year. If you want to tell me by mail, my address is SLIS, University of Pittsburgh or e-mail on INTERNET woolls@lis.pitt.edu. Another easy way to let me know is to travel to Pittsburgh. May I invite you to come next July to attend the International association on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh where you will fly into one of the newest and most beautiful airports in the world, see the nationality classrooms around the first two floors of the Cathedral of Learning, one of the tallest classroom buildings in the world, and visit the largest dinosaur bone collection in the world at the Carnegie Museum. This may be another kind of change for you.

I'll make you one promise. My President's year will be completed. I'll share my "Changes Changes" with you.

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